Play 10/11

Engaging the Community & Managing Guests

Sports Event Management and Marketing Playbook

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Engaging the Community: Overview

- A host community is full of valuable local resources that should be mobilized by an event organizer to achieve the greatest outcome for the event and the community
- An understanding relationship between community leaders and event organizers will benefit all parties, especially when dealing with those that may be negatively impacted by the event's presence

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Engaging the Community: Overview

- The economic impact of an event can be enhanced by working with local businesses and creating partnerships in and around the event
- Communities are often motivated to bring in events; each community will have different expectations and reactions to an event's presence

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Key Terms

- Gatekeepers – community representatives whose options and leadership provide consensus within a community
- Convention and visitors bureau (CVB)
- MWBEs – minority and women owned businesses

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Sports Events Impact On Host Communities

- Local governments seek and support sports events for a host of emotional and practical, economic reasons
- Sports events not only provide entertainment and revenue to a local community, they are also a source of civic pride and can improve local infrastructure
- However, sports events may cause confusion, congestion, noise and other issues created by the influx of activity and bother some local residents

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How Communities React To Sports Events

Reasons They Like Them	Reasons They Dislike Them
• Community pride • Quality of life • Self-image • Promotion of city to the outside world • Competitiveness with rival communities • Showcase of local talent • Business opportunities • Retail • Hospitality and accommodations • New business • Future events • Tax revenues • Grants for capital improvements • Existing facility utilization	• Congestion • Crowds • Traffic • Noise • Interference with normal business • Security (fear/incidents of unruly behavior) • Setting of precedents (apprehension of future events) • Pollution and litter • Political opposition from disenfranchised neighborhoods • Expenditure of taxpayer funds in support of events • Degradation of existing facilities

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Identifying Gatekeepers

- The most effective way of addressing community concerns before they surface is to engage local government officials, business organizations, and community leaders early in the planning process
- Gatekeepers are the influencers whose opinion and leadership help build consensus in the community

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Identifying Gatekeepers

- Gatekeepers are advocates for the citizens and businesses in their jurisdiction
  - They understand what kinds of marketing and community relations programs will work in their city
- It is up to the organizer to incorporate the intimate intelligence provided by the gatekeepers into the event's plans

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Identifying Gatekeepers

- Gatekeepers come from a variety of roles and places within the community:
  - **City Officials**
    - Mayor and/or city manager
    - Deputy mayor
    - Communications director
    - Marketing director
    - Executive director, convention and visitors bureau
  - **Business Development Organizations**
    - Convention and visitors bureau
    - Chamber(s) of commerce
    - Business improvement districts or business partnerships

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Identifying Gatekeepers

- Gatekeepers come from a variety of roles and places within the community:
  - **Civic Groups**
    - Rotary International
    - Kiwanis
    - American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars
    - Labor union(s)
  - **Sports Organizations**
    - Amateur sports federations
    - Academic sports organizations
    - Grassroots and recreational sports leagues

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Identifying Gatekeepers

- Value in identifying the gatekeeper(s) for your type of event
- Philadelphia's "We The People" Parade
  - Celebration of US Constitution
  - Dr. "No" – senior PPD officer served as liaison
  - Motivated not by public safety, but personal inconvenience and lack of interest
  - Refused to suggest alternatives, provide feedback, work together
  - Identified deputy mayor that shared common interest
  - Dr. "No" reassigned

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Involving Local Business

- Provide opportunities for official sponsorship
- Provide opportunities for local businesses to serve as contractors for the event
- Place posters in retailer windows
- Offer advance event ticket purchase opportunities to member businesses and their employees
- Consider developing cross-promotions with local attractions
- Arrange to hang event promotion banners on streetlight poles along major thoroughfares in the city

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Involving Local Business

- Focus on specific groups in the community that would serve to benefit most from contracts or cross-promotion with the event
  - Chamber of commerce
  - Local not-for-profits
    - Many communities have local associations focused on developing business in specific areas of the city
  - Certified minority and woman-owned business enterprises (MWBEs)
  - Restaurants
  - Area attractions and events

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Summary

- The host community is a highly motivated and valuable resource that should be engaged
- Business development groups can provide excellent source of exposure and supportive cross-promotions
- Organizing and host committees can provide counsel, work, and accountability to a sports event organizer

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Accommodating and Managing Guests: Overview

- Effectively selling tickets to a sports event requires a well thought out sales and marketing strategy
- There are two approaches – reducing inventory and “papering the house” – to help reduce financial and reputational losses if ticket sales are slower than expected

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Accommodating and Managing Guests: Overview

- Strong guest management demands organizers to constantly monitor and manage the needs of guests
- Carefully evaluate the hotels being considered as host and headquarter properties and be mindful of contractual obligations of both parties

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Key Terms

- Seat kills – specific seats that can't be sold
- Ticket brokers – 3rd party that can sell your event tickets
- Papering the house – method of filling empty seats
- Conflict seats – seats held back in event that other seats become compromised

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Selling Tickets

- Tickets are monetary instruments
- Only print tickets once they are accounted for by guests
- Remove all hospitality and complimentary tickets from the lot to be sold
  - Be sure to also eliminate “seat kills” – tickets for seats obstructed by event equipment
- Security to prevent duplication and counterfeiting of tickets is a must
  - Bar codes, UV images, watermarks, holographic stickers
- Reserved seating vs. general admission (GA)
  - Erskine FB example – COVID/venue complications

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When to Sell Tickets

- Tickets for any type of event should be sold in advance to help cover pre-event expenses and guarantee attendance
- Timing is everything: map out an appropriate sales calendar, do not start too early or late
- Create a sense of urgency to buy
- Make the point-of-sale convenient for customers

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How to Sell Tickets

- Convenience is key, but different groups of guest perceive it differently (digital vs. hard copy)
- Internet or Phone
  - Examples: Event website, Ticketmaster, Eventbrite, Hometown Ticketing
- Venue Box Office
  - Open the ticket office at the venue on the day of sale through the event date
- Local “Box Office”
  - Partner with local businesses to distribute tickets at their stores

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Ticket Brokers

- Resell tickets they purchase from the organizer, the box office or from other buyers
  - Can partner with “official” ticketing broker
- Laws governing acceptable business practices of ticket brokers and the maximum fees they may legally charge vary
- StubHub, an Internet ticket brokering service, has become a popular secondary market for sports event tickets
  - Some professional teams have created their own Internet ticket brokering systems based on this model

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What to Do if Tickets are Not Selling

- Reduction of Inventory
  - Close off less desirable sections of the venue that were previously open for ticketing
  - Cover the sections with tarps or remove seats and move guests with tickets in these areas to higher priced sections with unsold seats
- Papering the House
  - A last minute strategy of issuing and distributing complimentary tickets to fill unsold seats to make the event venue appear more full
  - Can result in positive financial returns as complimentary ticket holders may still purchase concessions or event merchandise
  - Ex. Plane taking off with or without people in the seats

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Guest Management

- Every event will have guests – individuals with complimentary invitations to the event
  - Sponsor and broadcast partnerships
  - Business partners
  - Key local leaders and officials
  - Offerings of gratitude by the organizer
- Number of guests each partner may invite is usually negotiated contractually
- Remove tickets to accommodate these guests
  - Some tickets may be “for purchase” via sponsor

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Conflict and ADA Seats

- Conflict Seats
  - Seats set aside specifically for the instance that ticket seats have become compromised because of obstructions or event equipment
- ADA Seats
  - Seating must be reserved for those with mobility, visual auditory or other impairments
  - Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

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Guest Management Systems

- All events should keep a database of guests and their needs
  - Complete guest list needed in case of technology failure, lost ticket, etc.
- Organizers should monitor and update this information on a regular basis to ensure the best experience for event guests
- The record should be detailed and maintained for future efficiency (See Figure 11.4)
- Maintain a reliable system of communication with guests to deliver any pertinent information or updates in a timely manner

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Hotel Management

- What hotels want from events
  - Groups that they know will fill sleeping rooms (70-80% capacity) and generate restaurant and catering revenue (dinners and parties)
  - Hotels are betting for/against event success. Reserving a large % of their rooms for an event means they have less rooms to sell to other guests
  - Good “pick up” history from event
- What events want from hotels
  - Premium accommodations for their athletes, guests and staff with the least financial risk
  - Great guest service – the hotel is a reflection of the event itself for all those involved
  - Space for staff to work

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Evaluating Hotels

- Some important areas to evaluate when assessing a hotel include:
  - Geographic location and proximity to event site(s)
  - Overall hotel quality (via independent ratings)
  - Suitability of rooms
  - Sufficient rooms and suites available on first hold
  - Room rates
  - Business center services
  - VIP amenities
  - Signage policy
  - Deposit and payment schedule
  - Cancellation policy

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Summary

- Design a ticket sales campaign that establishes a sense of urgency, but allows enough time for the public to respond
- Keep track of all guest needs by establishing a guest management system that works best for your event
- Carefully evaluate hotels under consideration as host and headquarters properties and negotiate the best contract possible to avoid financial risk

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Assignment 10/11

- Use the beach volleyball tournament from Assignments 6 and 7/8.
- Identify 2 “gatekeepers” that you would use to influence the attitude and perceptions of the event in the local area.
  - Give detailed reasons why you chose these 2 people
- Assume tickets are being sold for the event. Describe your ticket selling strategy and make sure to include:
  - How far in advance you would start selling tickets? (slide 19)
  - What method(s) you will use to sell tickets? (slide 20)
  - Which technique would you use if tickets were not selling? (slide 21)
  - Give your reasoning for all decisions you made

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